

VZCZCXRO3732
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHKL #0588/01 1921153
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 101153Z JUL 08
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1319
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 0119
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0439
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2575
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUALA LUMPUR 000588

SIPDIS

FOR EAP AND INR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/10/2028
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [MY](#)
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION FILES NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION;
PM ABDULLAH MAY SET 2010 HAND-OVER DATE

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 575 - NAJIB FIGHTS BACK
[1](#)B. KUALA LUMPUR 572 - NAJIB IMPLICATED IN MURDER
[1](#)C. KUALA LUMPUR 570 - GOM DELIVERS PROTEST TO USG
[1](#)D. KUALA LUMPUR 563 - ANWAR ON OFFENSIVE
[1](#)E. KUALA LUMPUR 557 - ANWAR TAKES REFUGE

Classified By: Political Section Chief Mark D. Clark, reason
1.4 (b and d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Malaysia's opposition coalition has filed a no-confidence motion in Parliament against Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi as part of Anwar Ibrahim's new "offensive" against the National Front government. The Opposition does not expect the motion to succeed, and instead sees this as one way to put the government on the defensive. The Parliament Speaker, who has discretion in the matter, has already informally told Opposition leaders he will not approve the motion for a vote. The Opposition's no-confidence maneuver coincides with a major UMNO party gathering at which it is rumored PM Abdullah will commit himself to stepping down in 2010 and handing over to Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak. End Summary.

"People's Loss of Confidence in Government's Integrity"

[1](#)2. (SBU) Malaysia's opposition Peoples Coalition (Pakatan Rakyat, PR) on July 10 filed an emergency motion requesting a vote of no-confidence in Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi and his cabinet. Peoples Justice Party (PKR) president and Opposition parliamentary leader Wan Azizah, wife of de facto opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, announced the no-confidence measure in an afternoon press conference at the Parliament. Senior leader from the other two opposition parties, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS), joined in the press conference. PR leaders referred to a "crisis of confidence" in Abdullah's leadership, noting in particular fuel price hikes, federal neglect of the five PR-controlled states, and government intimidation of National Front (BN) members of Parliament to prevent their defection to the Opposition. The formal request cites the "people's loss of confidence in the government's integrity."

Opposition Maneuver Part of "Offensive"

[1](#)3. (C) An MP and close political associate of Anwar Ibrahim told polchief on July 10 that PR leaders had

approved the no-confidence measure late on July 9, and that this was part of the Opposition's new "offensive" against the BN government. [Comment: Anwar Ibrahim took the offensive after an aide subsequently linked to the government filed sodomy allegations against Anwar, recalling Anwar's politically-motivated jailing and prosecution in 1998. End Comment.] The MP said that Opposition leaders did not expect the no-confidence motion to succeed or even receive the Speaker's approval, but that nevertheless it was a move to keep PM Abdullah's government off balance and on the defensive. As another symbolic gesture, Anwar Ibrahim will begin to appear more often in Parliament (Anwar is not an MP), and Anwar and the Opposition were considering other short-term initiatives to unsettle the BN government, the MP said.

Will Not Come to Vote, Speaker Says

¶4. (C) Under parliamentary rules, the government-appointed Parliament Speaker has discretion to reject an emergency motion if he judges it not important, urgent or specific. The Speaker must decide within 24 hours on the motion. Parliament is closed Friday, July 11, so the Speaker's decision on the no-confidence motion is due on Monday, July 21. A senior Opposition source informed us that Parliament Speaker Pandikar had already informally told Pakatan leaders that he would not approve the motion for action.

Government Dismisses Ploy

KUALA LUMP 00000588 002 OF 002

¶5. (SBU) Government actors immediately dismissed the Opposition's no-confidence move. De facto Minister for parliamentary affairs Nazri Aziz called the motion "rubbish" Deputy Home Minister Wan Farid told us the measure was a "complete waste of time." Other MPs from Abdullah's UMNO party spoke confidently of defeating the motion if it came to a vote. [Note: BN has 140 seats in Parliament, against 82 in the Opposition. End Note.]

PM Could Set Hand-Over Date at Major UMNO Gathering Today

¶6. (C) The Opposition's no-confidence motion coincided with a major gathering of UMNO party leaders in Kuala Lumpur, at which it is rumored PM Abdullah will commit himself to stepping down in 2010 and handing over to Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak. Deputy Home Minister Wan Farid, who is an advisor to PM Abdullah, told us that the Prime Minister is not likely to specify an exact date or month so that Abdullah could stay in office until December 2010. The UMNO gathering of party division leaders and Supreme Council members takes place ahead of the kick-off to the UMNO party elections, a five-month process that formally begins on July 17. The UMNO meeting is on-going as of the writing of this cable.

KEITH